

Metadata animation transcript

Animation: Two cartoon men are standing outside a supermarket. One is light green and the other is dark green.

Light green man: I have access to some datasets to help with my research but I am not sure whether they are useful. What can I do?

Dark green man: Well, you need access to metadata.

Light green man: What is metadata?

Animation: Light green man shrugs.

Dark green man: Metadata is the information that defines and describes data. It is often referred to as information about data. It provides data users with information about the purpose, processes, and methods involved in the data collection.

Light green man: So why do I need to know about metadata?

Animation: Light green man shrugs.

Dark green man: The way we use metadata in statistics is similar to how we use information to help us make decisions every day. For example, when shopping in a supermarket... Let's head inside!

Animation: The two men walk into the supermarket. The scene changes, they are standing in a supermarket aisle. The shelves are full of cans with no visible labels. A poster of a can is in the background with the words 'Sale! \$2 each' written above it.

Dark green man: Would you like to buy any cans from this shop?

Light green man: I don't know. They all look the same and I don't know what is in any of them.

Dark green man: Then, you'll need more information. So the cans need a label.

Animation: Light green man picks up a can off the shelf

Dark green man: What information do you need on the label?

Light green man: I need information which will tell me what is inside the can.

Animation: Image shows close up of the can which is labelled 'Vegetable Soup' and has a picture of celery, carrot and tomato on it.

Dark green man: From the label we know it is a can of food, specifically soup. We also know that it is vegetable soup.

Light green man: Well I did want to buy soup today, but I'd like to see what ingredients it has and how to prepare it.

Dark green man: Then the label needs more information to help you make your decision.

Animation: Can rotates and we see the back of the can, it reads “Ingredients”. Beneath that there is a picture of tomato, carrot and celery and the words “Preparation Instructions...”

Dark green man: You may also want the label to tell you...

Animation: Close up of the can appears with lots of words appearing around it:

- Nutritional Information
- Best before date and date of production
- Brand name and logos
- Serving size suggestions
- Measure of quantity
- Brief description of product
- Price
- Country of Origin

Dark green man: So, has the label given you the information you need to decide whether or not to buy the can?

Light green man: Yes. But what does this have to do with metadata?

Dark green man: In statistics, if we have access to metadata we can understand what the dataset contains and whether it is what we need.

Light green man: Ah, in this example, the soup represents data, and the information on the label, for instance the name, flavour, or ingredients, represents the metadata. So, if I needed more information about some data, I would refer to the available sources of metadata to find the relevant information.

Animation: End